Conditions for Selecting International Environmental Regimes

—The U.S. and the G20 regime on Marine Plastic Litter—[*]

Tamaki TAKAO[**]

Refereed Article

Received: 23 March 2020, Accepted: 26 July 2020

Abstract

Marine Plastic Litter (MPL) has become one of the most important agendas of international environmental policy. Research on international cooperation is required, focusing on countries that are heavily involved in environmental pollution ("major contributing countries."). However, previous research has not fully described the function of variables that influence a country's decision to join international environmental regimes. To address this problem, this article will conduct a case study of the U.S. decision, which rejected the Ocean Plastics Charter but joined the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision and the G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter, by analyzing the following question: "why did the U.S., as a major contributing country in the field of MPL, decided to join the G20 regime but rejected the G7 regime on MPL?" This question will be discussed through two perspectives: (1) differences between the G7 regime and the G20 regime on MPL and (2) the U.S. stance on MPL under the Trump administration. This article concludes that the two variables: (1) involvement of other major contributing countries, and (2) flexibility of policy approaches, function as conditions for the decision of a major contributing country about whether or not to join an international environmental regime.

Keywords: Marine Plastic Litter, Osaka Blue Ocean Vision, G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter, United States, Forum Shopping

[*] The author is grateful to Professor Fumiaki Kubo for his supervision.
[**] Ministry of the Environment, Japan. (The views and opinions expressed herein are those of the author and do not reflect any of the views of the organization.)

1. Introduction

Marine Plastic Litter (MPL) has become one of the most important agendas of international environmental policy. MPL causes several negative impacts to marine organisms, coastal environments, vessels, and to industries, such as fishery and tourism.[1] According to a study by the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, "more than 260 species are already known to be affected by plastic debris through entanglement or ingestion."[2] A report published by the World Economic Forum has drawn global attention to the increase of MPL. This report shows an estimated increase of MPL, suggesting that "the ocean is expected to contain 1 ton of plastic for every 3 tons of fish by 2025, and by 2050, more plastics than fish by weight."[3]

Furthermore, microplastics, commonly defined as "any plastic particle <5 mm in diameter, which includes particles in the nano-size range,"[4] have also created potential concern to ecosystem,[5] since they can function as vectors of toxic materials.[6] It is observed that microplastics can enter into species through ingestion. From these processes in which microplastics infiltrate the food chain, there are potential health concern to organisms including humans.[7]

While there are several political approaches to tackle the problem of MPL, there is no "one-size fits all" solution to this problem. Approaches vary according to the life-cycle of plastics, from upstream (production) to downstream (waste management and collection). Measures include but are not limited to "innovation of more sustainable products, new and improved waste management infrastructure, a global fund to help pay for development of new infrastructure and sustainable technologies, educational campaigns, clean-ups, and product bans."[8]

The important point of this problem is that outflow of plastic litter from one country to another could damage other countries' coastal environment. This transboundary character makes MPL a global issue.

However, international cooperation of MPL is still under development. Although there are several international legally binding instruments that include regulations on MPL, current frameworks remain "fragmented and uncoordinated."[9] Some international groups have formulated regimes about MPL. The Group of 7 (G7) established the Ocean Plastics Charter, and the Group of 20 (G20) formulated the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision and the G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter. However, these regimes do not cover

---

[1] Ministry of the Environment, Japan, *令和元年版環境白書・循環型社会白書・生物多様性白書 [Annual Report on the Environment, the Sound Material-Cycle Society and Biodiversity in Japan 2019]* (Tokyo: June 7, 2019), p.68, accessed February 8, 2020, http://www.env.go.jp/policy/hakusyo/r01/pdf/full.pdf.

[2] Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, *Marine Debris as a Global Environmental Problem: Introducing a solutions based framework focused on plastic, A STAP Information Document*, (Washington DC: Global Environment Facility, 2011), p.9, accessed February 8, 2020, http://www.stapgef.org/sites/default/files/stap/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Marine-Debris.pdf.

[3] World Economic Forum, *The New Plastic Economy: Rethinking the future of plastics*, (Geneva: 2016), accessed February 8, 2020, http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_The_New_Plastics_Economy.pdf.

[4] Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection, *Sources, Fate and Effects of Microplastics in the Marine Environment: Part 2 of a Global Assessment*, (London, IMO, 2016), p.17, accessed February 8, 2020, http://www.gesamp.org/site/assets/files/1275/sources-fate-and-effects-of-microplastics-in-the-marine-environment-part-2-of-a-global-assessment-en.pdf.

[5] Microplastics has mainly two types; primary microplastics and secondary microplastics which "generates from fragmentation of larger plastic items. Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection, *Sources, Fate and Effects of Microplastics in the Marine Environment: Part 2 of a Global Assessment*, 2016, p.18.

[6] Atsuhiko Isobe et al, "Selective transport of microplastics and mesoplastic by drifting in coastal waters" Marine Pollution Bulletin, 89 (2014), pp.324-330, p.1. Ina Tessnow-von Wysocki, Philippe Le Billon, "Plastics at sea: Treaty design for a global solution to marine plastic pollution."

[7] Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection, *Sources, Fate and Effects of Microplastics in the Marine Environment: Part 2 of a Global Assessment*, 2016, p.90.

[8] Clara Thaysen et al, "Leachate From Expanded Polystyrene Cups Is Toxic to Aquatic Invertebrates (Ceriodaphina dubia)," *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 5-71 (2018), pp.113-121, p.113.

[9] UN Environment, 2017. *Combating Marine Plastic Litter and Microplastics: An Assessment of the Eff ectiveness of Relevant International, Regional and Subregional Governance Strategies and Approaches.* Also see, Karen Raubenheimer et al, "Towards an improved international framework to govern the life cycle of plastics," *Review of European, Comparative & International Environmental Law*, 27-3 (November 2018): pp.210-221.

the entire global community and since they have been established recently, their effectiveness towards solving the problem is limited.

Hence, promoting international cooperation is required to solve the problem of MPL. Here, it is necessary to understand the conditions that enable countries to join international regimes, especially conditions for countries that are heavily involved in environmental pollution (hereby, "major contributing countries." Criterion of major contributing countries of MPL in this article will be explained in 2.2) for effective international collaboration on this topic. Participation of major contributing countries in the international environmental regime is one of the most important conditions for the regime to be effective. Even if a regime with an ambitious clause or an agreement has been formulated, it would be less effective without the participation of major contributing countries. This applies not only to MPL but to other international environmental issues such as climate change because these environmental issues have transboundary characteristics as well. Therefore, clarifying the conditions that incentivize major contributing countries to join MPL regimes would enable more efficacious international environmental regimes to be formulated. However, previous research has not fully described the function of variables that influence countries' decisions. They do not fully address under what conditions a country ― especially a major contributing country― decides to join or reject environmental regime.

Based on the problems described above, this article will discuss the variables and the effects of those variables on the decisions of major contributing countries to participate in international regimes of the environmental problem. This analysis will be taken by focusing on the case of U.S. ―one of the major contributing countries on MPL― and its decision about international regimes regarding MPL under the Trump administration. While the U.S. rejected the Ocean Plastics Charter (the G7 regime) declared by the G7 in 2018, they joined the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision and the G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter (the G20 regime) declared by the G20 in 2019. The case of U.S. selection on MPL regimes has implications for which variables influence the decisions of major contributing countries to embrace one international regime over another.

Therefore, this article will take a case study analyzing the following question: "Why did the U.S., as a major contributing country in the field of MPL, decided to join the G20 regime but rejected the G7 regime on MPL?" This question will be discussed from two perspectives: (1) the differences between the G7 regime and the G20 regime on MPL, and (2) the U.S. policy on MPL under the Trump administration.

The second section will explain previous research on countries' selection on international regimes and its limitation and explain the framework and hypothesis of this research. The third part will compare the characteristics of the G7 regime and the G20 regime on MPL. The fourth section will discuss the U.S. stance towards the environment and MPL under the Trump administration, and its stance towards the two regimes. Finally, as a conclusion, the fifth section will provide an analysis of the conditions that enabled the U.S. to join the G20 regime while rejecting the G7 regime. The purpose of this study is to contribute to the discussion promoting international cooperation toward solving the problem of MPL and the involvement about the major contributing countries in the international environmental regime.

2. Previous Research and Hypothesis

2.1: Study on countries' selection on regimes and forum shopping

Previous research on countries' selection against international regime on a certain issue have been developed

through discussions of international regime. In international regime theory, a situation where multiple international regimes exist on a particular issue is explained as "regime complex."[10] Under this situation, previous research observed a phenomenon "forum shopping," where countries strategically selecting a favorable regime. This phenomenon is originally described in the study by Raustiala and Victor. Through the study of international institutions on plant genetic resources, they explain this concept that under the international situation of regime complex, countries select the most favorable forum to their interest.[11] While the original concept of forum shopping focuses on countries' selection of existing negotiation fora at the same time, it has come to be used to explain countries' action to establish an international regime despite the existence of a regime on a certain issue. For example, in the field of climate change, G8 action plan on climate change was established at the 2005 G8 summit and The Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate was established on 2005 under the initiative of the U.S. These actions are explained as forum shopping of the U.S. seeking opposition against UNFCCC.[12] Thus, the concept of forum shopping is used broadly to explain countries' selection, establishment, or utilization of regimes on a particular issue. Hence, reviewing studies of forum shopping offers understanding of countries' selection on international regimes.

Study by Raustiala and Victor explains the factors that affect forum shopping, which include "barriers to entry, membership, and linkages among issues." In the case of plant genetic resources, the U.S. and the EU sought a different forum ―the WTO― rather than the FAO to negotiate the issue, since the FAO was dominated by developing countries which were inconsistent with the interest of the U.S. and the EU. Here, they linked the issue with trade and finance during the negotiation process. On the other hand, the FAO was relatively easy for developing countries to graft their interest since it was an open forum. Developing countries linked plant genetic resources issue with biodiversity in the negotiation process.

Smythe conducted a case study of the negotiation of international agreements on foreign investment within the OECD and the WTO as separate host arenas.[13] She concludes that actors view international economic organizations strategically and seek influence in place of negotiating the issue. In her study, some actors preferred to negotiate in a regime with limited members, while others preferred to negotiate with a broader range of members. According to Smythe, The U.S. ―a major capital exporter― preferred to negotiate in the OECD, while the EU preferred the WTO, which is broader, as a negotiation regime.

Although Smythe does not use the term "forum shopping", Smythe's study is classified as a study of forum shopping in the scholarship by Murphy and Kellow.[14] Their study took a case of global labor standards, intellectual property rights, access to medicines, and international chemical regulations to research forum shopping systemically. Their work explains that countries' conduct forum shopping to evade unfavorable institutional

---

[10] Raustiala and Victor define regime complex as "array of partially overlapping and nonhierchical institutions governing a particular issue-area." Kal Raustiala and David G. Victor, "The Regime Complex for Plant Genetic Resources," *International Organization*, 58-2, (Spring 2004), pp.277-309, p.279. Keohane and Victor defines regime complex as "collective of partially overlapping and nonhierarchical regimes." Robert O. Keohane and David G. Victor, "The Regime Complex for Climate Change," Discussion paper 2010-33, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Harvard Project on International Climate Agreements.

[11] Raustiala and Victor, "The Regime Complex for Plant Genetic Resources."

[12] Fang-Ting Cheng, *重層レジームと気候変動交渉：米中対立から協調、パリ協定へ [The Formulation of Complementary Relationships among Overlapping Regimes: Negotiations on Climate Change, U.S.-China Relations, and the Paris Agreement]*, (Kanagawa: Gendaitosho, 2017). Takahiro Ueno, *複数制度化する温暖化防止の国際枠組み―京都議定書、G8 サミット、アジア太平洋パートナーシップの並存状況の分析― [Parallel Tracks for Global Climate Change Regime: Analysis on the Coexistence of UNFCCC/Kyoto, G8 and Asia Pacific Partnership]*, (Tokyo: CRIEPI Research Report, 2006).

[13] Elizabeth Smythe, "Your Place or Mine? States, International Organizations and the Negotiation of Investment Rules," *Transnational Corporations*, 7-3, (1998), pp.85-120.

[14] Hannah Murphy and Aynsley Kellow, "Forum Shopping in Global Governance: Understanding States, Business and NGOs in Multiple Arenas," *Global Policy*, 4-2 (2013), pp.139-149.

characteristics and to build momentum for policy goals. Institutional characteristics include membership, issue mandate, decision making procedures and enforcement capacity. Here, broad membership and strong enforcement mechanism benefitted developing countries on global labor standard issues. Also, NGOs took advantage by utilizing strong issue mandate of WHO in health and progressed the issue of medicines case.

Among the arguments in the previous studies, factors that have been considered as a determinant of national regime selection are barriers to entry, membership, linkages among issues, issue mandate, decision making procedures and enforcement capacity. Countries utilize these aspects of international regimes and select their favorable regime to promote their interest.

However, previous studies have failed to provide clear definition on these factors. Although they exemplified these keywords to explain each case, they were not well operationalized for an empirical study. In other words, prior works embrace limitation on explaining what these factors mean and how they affect countries' behavior on forum shopping.

Also, in previous studies, other factors besides regime characteristics such as policy goals of regimes and countries, are not controlled. In order to observe the institutional characteristics that determine participation in a regime for a particular issue, it is necessary to control factors other than the institutional characteristics of the regime.

In addition, for the regime to be effective in solving the problem, involvement of major contributing countries is an important condition. Without having such countries in the regime, the regime cannot cover majority of emissions. Research centered on major contributing countries is required.

2.2: Hypothesis

Based on the discussion and limitation of previous research explained in the previous section, this article will analyze the difference of characteristics between the two regimes facing a similar goal and how a country perceived the difference, and will address the conditions that enable major contributing countries to join an international environmental regime. This will be conducted through a case study of the decision of the U.S. —one of the major contributing countries on MPL— against two recent regimes on MPL. The two regimes are the G7: Ocean Plastics Charter, and the G20: G20 Implementation Framework for Action on Marine Plastic Litter and Osaka Blue Ocean Vision. This section will explain the framework of this research.

First, as written in the introduction, the criterion of major contributing countries on MPL for this article will be clarified. While there are no globally agreed statistics on MPL outflow from each country, an article posted on "Science" by Jenna R. Jambeck et al, provides accurate figures.[15] This article will use the data provided by Jambeck in order to define the countries that can be classified as major contributing countries on MPL. Based on data that includes factors such as population size and quality of waste management, Jambeck provides estimation of MPL outflow by countries and lists the top 20 countries of outflow of MPL. Here, China is ranked 1st, followed by Indonesia and the Philippines. The U.S. is ranked 20th. Thus, in this article, "major contributing countries" is defined as the top 20 countries of MPL outflow listed by Jambeck. The 20 countries are as follows: China, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Egypt, Malaysia, Nigeria, Bangladesh, South Africa, India, Algeria, Turkey, Pakistan, Brazil, Burma, Morocco, North Korea and the United States.[16]

[15] Jenna R. Jambeck et al, "Plastic waste inputs from land into the ocean," *Science*, 347 (2015), pp.768-771.
[16] Ibid, p.769.

Second, the U.S. is the only major contributing country on MPL that is also a member of both the G7 and the G20. Yet, although the U.S. and Japan are the only two countries that rejected the G7 regime but became a member of the G20 regime, Japan was a chair of the 2019 G20 meetings, which meant that Japan was on the side of creating the G20 regime rather than joining it. Thus, Japan cannot be used as a country for this case study on the country's decision to join a regime. For these reasons, this study selected the U.S. as its case study country.

Third, both the G7 regime and the G20 regime were both established closely in time (G7: 2018, G20: 2109). There were no major changes in the conditions of MPL and the U.S. administration.[17] Thus, the intervention of other factors beyond the characteristics of the two regimes can be minimized. and the use of the G7 and the G20 regimes as a comparison is valid for this study.[18]

Fourth, the analysis will be taken by focusing on two variables. First, based on each of the previous studies explained above focusing on membership, this article will target on membership. Comparing the two regimes through this perspective, the G7 and the G20 have a difference regarding the involvement of major contributing countries. Hence, the first variable will be set as "involvement of major contributing countries." Second, previous studies also focus on factors such as issue mandate and barriers to entry. These factors relate to the binding force of regimes. In this regard, the G7 and the G20 have a major difference between the flexibility of policy approaches. The second variable, therefore, will be set as "flexibility of policy approaches."[19]

Based on this framework, the following section will further compare the two regimes through the two variables and explain how they are different. Then, the fourth part will analyze how the U.S. evaluated the two variables and how the two variables affected its decision, by describing the U.S. position on environmental issues especially on MPL and its stance towards the two regimes.

3. Comparison of the G7 regime and the G20 regime on MPL

3.1: The G7 regime: Ocean Plastics Charter

In 2018, the Ocean Plastics Charter was established at the G7 Charlevoix summit under the Canadian presidency. The Ocean Plastics Charter lists several specific targets for MPL on a resource-efficient and life-cycle approach.[20]

Although 26 countries and 65 actors from businesses and organizations are defined as partners of the charter (as of February 8, 2020), the original members that signed the charter were Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the European Union.[21] However, among the G7 members, the U.S. and Japan rejected to join the charter at the summit.[22] In addition, none of the five original members of the charter were listed as part of the top

[17] In May 2019, annex of Basel Convention was amended restricting trade of contaminated plastics, and there was a change in administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency from Scott Pruitt to Andrew Wheeler.
[18] While the Ocean Plastics Charter was established in 2018, these two agreements are established in 2019. Members of the G7 such as the U.S. and Japan faced the G20 with the G7 discussion in mind (see Chapter 4 and 5). However, MPL was taken up as an agenda in the previous the G7 and the G20 meetings, and some cooperation was agreed on each of the G7 and G20 (2015 G7 Elmau Summit, 2017 G20 Hamburg Summit). In addition, there are difference of membership between the G7 and the G20. Although Ocean Plastics Charter precede 2019 G20 summit, the results of the G7 did not function as a dominant factor of the G20 discussion, and both were discussed separately.
[19] Under the George. W. Bush administration, the U.S. withdrew from the Kyoto Protocol of UNFCCC and later formulated a Major Emitters Forum (MEF) in 2007, which set its own flexible rules for climate change. Although this is a case in which the U.S. created its own regime, it implicates the importance of flexibility in accessing environmental regimes. Keohane and David G.Victor, "The Regime Complex for Climate Change."
[20] University of Toronto, "Charlevoix Blueprint for Healthy Oceans, Seas and Resilient Coastal Communities," accessed February 8, 2020, http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2018charlevoix/oceans-blueprint.html.
[21] Government of Canada, "Ocean Plastics Charter," accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/managing-reducing-waste/international-commitments/ocean-plastics-charter.html.
[22] Catherine Benson Wahlen, "Five G7 Countries and EU Pledge to Tackle Pollution in Ocean Plastics Charter," International Institute for Sustainable Development, June 14, 2018, accessed February 8, 2020, https://sdg.iisd.org/news/five-g7-countries-and-eu-pledge-to-tackle-pollution-in-ocean-plastics-charter/.

20 MPL-emitting countries given by Jambeck.[23]

The charter defines five actions expected to be taken by the members: (1) sustainable design, production and after-use markets, (2) collection, management and other systems and infrastructure, (3) sustainable lifestyles and education, (4) research, innovation and new technologies, and (5) coastal and shoreline action.

In line with these measures, the charter also defines specific numerical goals to be achieved in the coming decades, such as (1) "working with industry towards 100% reusable, recyclable, or, where viable alternatives do not exist, recoverable, plastics by 2030," (2) "working with industry towards increasing recycled content by at least 50% in plastic products where applicable by 2030," (3) "working with industry towards reducing the use of plastic microbeads in rinse-off cosmetic and personal care consumer products, to the extent possible by 2020, and addressing other sources of microplastics," and (4) "working with industry and other levels of government, to recycle and reuse at least 55% of plastic packaging by 2030 and recover 100% of all plastics by 2040."[24]

These targets were the key features of the Ocean Plastics Charter. The charter lists specific actions to be taken by members throughout the life-cycle of plastics to achieve these targets. In addition, although numerical targets are not given, the charter also declares "significantly reducing the unnecessary use of single-use plastics," and "encouraging the application of a whole supply chain approach to plastic production toward greater responsibility and prevent unnecessary loss, including in pre-production plastic pellets"[25] as actions that must be taken by the members. Thus, the charter declares members to take every policy approach listed in the charter through the life-cycle of plastics and expects industrial regulation policy to be implemented by members.

3.2: The G20 regime: Osaka Blue Ocean Vision and G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter

The G20 agreed to take measures against MPL at the Osaka summit in 2019. The Osaka Blue Ocean Vision, a vision against MPL, was shared among the leaders. The target declared in this vision is "to reduce additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050."[26]

In addition to the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision, the G20 leaders endorsed the G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter.[27] This was originally agreed on the G20 Ministerial Meeting on Energy Transitions and Global Environment for Sustainable Growth which was held in Karuizawa, Japan, in June 2019. Under this framework, member countries will continuously share and update information on relevant policies among members to realize the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision.

The Osaka Blue Ocean Vision and the G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter are the two agreements on MPL which were established during the G20 Osaka Summit and related ministerial meetings under the Japanese presidency.

The Osaka Blue Ocean vision aims to reduce additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050. This goal is clearly stated in paragraph 39 of the leaders' declaration of the Osaka Summit:

> We reiterate that measures to address marine litter, especially marine plastic litter and microplastics, need to

[23] Jambeck et al, "Plastic waste inputs from land into the ocean," p.769.
[24] Government of Canada, "Ocean Plastics Charter."
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, "G20 Osaka Leaders Declaration," June 29, 2019, accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/economy/g20_summit/osaka19/en/documents/final_g20_osaka_leaders_declaration.html.
[27] Ibid.

> be taken nationally and internationally by all countries in partnership with relevant stakeholders. In this regard, we are determined to swiftly take appropriate national actions for the prevention and significant reduction of discharges of plastic litter and microplastics to the oceans. Furthermore, looking ahead beyond those initiatives and existing actions by each member, we share, and call on other members of the international community to also share, as a common global vision, the "Osaka Blue Ocean Vision" that we aim to reduce additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050 through a comprehensive life-cycle approach that includes reducing the discharge of mismanaged plastic litter by improved waste management and innovative solutions while recognizing the important role of plastics for society. We also endorse the G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter.[28]

Here, while the vision defines a comprehensive life-cycle approach identical to the Ocean Plastics Charter and list several policy approaches, it does not declare that members must take certain policy measures.

The G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter complements the realization of the Vision through continuous reporting of measures taken by members.[29]

The policy approaches of the Implementation Framework are defined as follows:

> Promote a comprehensive life-cycle approach to urgently and effectively prevent and reduce plastic litter discharge to the oceans, in particular from land-based sources, through measures, inter alia, environmentally sound waste management, environmentally sound clean-up of marine plastic litter, deployment of innovative solutions, and international cooperation to enhance national capacities, as well as prevention and reduction of plastic waste generation and littering, promotion of sustainable consumption and production, including but not limited to promoting resource efficiency, circular economy, sustainable materials management, waste to value approach, and measures to address sea-based sources.[30]

Again, this framework declares a comprehensive life-cycle approach. On the other hand, specific policy measures including environmentally sound waste management and the promotion of sustainable consumption and production are listed as “inter alia.” These were presented as a “list of choices” for members. Hence, it enables members to choose favorable options toward realizing the vision.

The reporting process also gives flexibility to countries. The indicators to measure the progress were as follows:

> the amount of wastes generated, reused, collected, recycled, and properly disposed of; the amount of marine litter cleaned up; the scale of use of innovative technologies and materials including R&D investment; the scale and/or effect of assistance for countries that need technical capacity development including the increased amount of wastes properly disposed of (encouraged to indicate the proportion/elements of plastic waste and/or microplastics, if available)[31]

---

[28] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, “G20 Osaka Leaders Declaration.”
[29] Ministry of the Environment, Japan, “Results of G20 Resource Efficiency Dialogue 2019 and follow up of the G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter,” accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.env.go.jp/en/water/marine_litter/2019g20fu.html.
[30] Ministry of the Environment, Japan, “G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter,” accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.env.go.jp/press/files/jp/111826.pdf.
[31] Ibid.

Here, while various indicators on the life-cycle of plastics were provided, countries were able to choose the indicators most appropriate to them.

Thus, while the vision and the framework listed various policy measures, these remained as a "list of choices" which enabled flexibility to members. The G20 members can choose their own route to achieve the goal towards 2050 and can present their achievements continuously through follow up meetings and reports by using the indicators suitably.

3.3: Comparing the G7 regime and the G20 regime

Based on the explanation of the previous sections, this section will compare the G7 regime (Ocean Plastics Charter) and the G20 regime (Osaka Blue Ocean Vision and G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter) with regard to the two variables: (1) involvement of major contributing countries, and (2) flexibility of policy approaches.

First, involvement of major contributing countries will be assessed by membership within the G7 and the G20. The original members of the Ocean Plastics Charter were Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, U.S., the United Kingdom, and the EU. Although the EU is not a G7 member, it joined the Charter as an original member. However, according to the data by Jambeck, the total estimated outflow of MPL from the G7 members is merely 2% of the global outflow as of 2010. In addition, members of the G7 did not include any of the major contributing countries.[32] On the other hand, the members of the G20 (G7 plus China, Russia, India, Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, Australia, South Korea, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Argentina, and EU) include several major contributing countries. Furthermore, according to the data by Jambeck, seven of the top 20 countries generating MPL were the G20 members. These countries were China, Indonesia, South Africa, India, Turkey, Brazil, and the U.S. The total amount of MPL generated from the G20 members accounts for approximately 48% of the entire MPL generation in the world. The percentage decreases slightly to 46% when the G7 members are excluded.[33] Thus, while the original members of the Ocean Plastics Charter are responsible for only a small percentage of the global MPL outflows without any of the major contributing countries, the original members of the G20 regime were the main generators of global MPL outflows and included several major contributing countries.

Second, concerning the flexibility of policy approaches, the Ocean Plastics Charter, by focusing on the upstream of plastics, defines specific approaches for members to take depending on the life-cycle of different types of plastics. Moreover, it specifies targets for the coming few decades for each policy approach. Hence, the Ocean Plastic Charter declares that members take each of the policy approaches listed in the charter including policy that restrict plastic production, to achieve each of the policy goals, lacking flexibility with regard to the country's choice on the policy for reducing outflow of MPL. On the other hand, the G20 regime only defines a long-term goal (Osaka Blue Ocean Vision) on MPL reduction and reporting procedures. Approaches to realize the vision were entrusted to the members under the G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter. While the framework takes a life-cycle approach as with the Ocean Plastics Charter, policy approaches listed in the framework were only given as "list of choices". In this way, the G20 regime offered flexibility in policy approaches compared to the Ocean Plastics Charter.

---

[32] Jambeck et al, "Plastic waste inputs from land into the ocean." Hiroshi Ono, "Outcomes of the G20 Ministerial Meeting on Energy Transitions and Global Environment for Sustainable Growth in Karuizawa, Nagano, Japan," (lecture, United Nations University, October 9, 2019), accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.pco-prime.com/g20/material/2-AM/2-AM-3.pdf.
[33] Ibid.

From these variables, compared to the G7 regime, the G20 regime (1) included majority of global MPL outflow and major contributing countries, such as China, Indonesia, India and U.S., (2) enabled more flexibility for members in choosing policy approaches. The outline of comparison is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of the G7 regime and the G20 regime

	The G7	The G20
Involvement of major contributing countries	● 2% of Global MPL outflows ● Does not include major contributing countries	● 48% of Global MPL outflows ● Includes several major contributing countries
Flexibility on policy approaches	● Less flexibility (Declares members to take every policy approach listed in the charter for each of the life-cycle of plastics, with numerical targets.)	● More flexibility (Members can choose their own policy approaches for zero additional pollution by MPL by 2050.)

4. U.S. Environmental Policy and position on the G7 regime and the G20 regime on MPL

4.1: U.S. Environmental Policy under the Trump Administration

While the Trump administration has been seen reluctant to take ambitious measures on environmental regulations as compared to the previous Obama administration, Trump has been emphasizing his intension to protect the environment, referring himself as a "protector of public land."[34]

On July 8, 2019, Trump gave a speech on the U.S. environmental leadership. His remarks represent the Trump administration's vision toward environmental policy. This vision is based on two principals: "less regulation" and "international fairness."

First, as for "less regulation," while emphasizing that the "administration has made it a top priority to ensure that America has among the very cleanest air and cleanest water on the planet," Trump criticizes the regulatory measures imposed on domestic industries that were implemented by the previous Obama administration.[35] Trump considers that these regulations were "punishments to Americans," especially in the energy sector. He perceives these measures to be a wrong way to produce a better environment or a better economy.[36]

Trump also emphasizes that rejecting this "failed approach" would increase domestic employment. Here, it is noteworthy that manufacturing industries, such as the automobile industry were key supporters of Trump during his presidential election. Laborers in these industries mainly work in the so-called "Rust Belt" area, in states such as Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania, and were against the environmental regulations implemented by the Obama administration. They perceived Obama's environmental regulations as the cause of a loss of industry

[34] Kate Rogers, Coral Davenport, "Trump Saw Opportunity in Speech on Environment. Critics Saw a "'1984" Moment," The New York Times, July 8, 2019, accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/08/us/politics/trump-environment-climate-change.html.
[35] The White House, "Remarks by President Trump on America's Environmental Leadership," accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-americas-environmental-leadership/.
[36] Ibid.

and employment.[37] Therefore, by eliminating the regulations and promising greater employment, Trump gained support from these sectors.[38] Withdrawal from the Paris Accord was an emblematic demonstration of his pledge to these "Rust Belt" supporters.

In addition, according to 2016 presidential election exit polls, 72% of Trump voters thought that the "government is doing too much."[39] Although this preference of a smaller government is in line with the philosophy of the Republican Party, it also represents the supporters' inclination for deregulation including environmental deregulation.

To meet this demand, the Trump administration promoted the elimination of environmental regulations. The administration has implemented 95 rollbacks of environmental regulations concerning a number of issues (as of December 2019), such as air pollution, drilling, toxic substances and water pollution. The largest rollbacks were carried out against regulations on air pollution and emissions, where the administration executed 25 rollbacks.[40] Specifically, the administration replaced the Obama administration's "Clean Power Plan" and implemented the less regulatory "Affordable Clean Energy" rule which "gives states the regulatory certainty they need to continue to reduce emissions and provide a dependable, diverse supply of electricity that all Americans can afford."[41]

Second, for "international fairness," Trump commented that the U.S. environment is impressively clean compared to other countries, stating:

> And today, the United States is ranked —listen to this— number one in the world for access to clean drinking water —ranked number one in the world. (Applause.)
>
> One of the main messages of air pollution —particulate matter— is six times lower here than the global average. So we hear so much about some countries and what everyone is doing. We're six times lower than the average. That's a tremendous number.[42]

Here, while claiming the U.S. is "honorable," Trump criticized other countries for their lack of progress of other countries on environmental policy. In addition, Trump emphasized MPL as a problem caused by foreign countries and depicted the U.S. as a victim of the problem when he expressed:

> And I'm sure you've all seen, by watching television, by maybe reading about it —it's a tremendous problem: Thousands and thousands of tons of this debris float onto our shores after it's dumped into the oceans by other countries. The tides come to us. Usually, that was a good thing, but this isn't so good. This is a tremendous problem. Thousands and thousands of tons of garbage comes to us.[43]

---

[37] Ryuichi Kanari, *ルポ トランプ王国2: ラストベルト再訪 [Report Trump Kingdom 2 : Revisit to the "Rust Belt"]*, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2019,) p.9.
[38] Alana Abramson, "'I Can Be More Presidential Than Any President.' Read Trump's Ohio Rally Speech," TIME, July 26, 2017, accessed February 8, 2020, https://time.com/4874161/donald-trump-transcript-youngstown-ohio/.
[39] CNN, "exit polls: election 2016," accessed February 8, 2020, https://edition.cnn.com/election/2016/results/exit-polls/national/president.
[40] Nadja Popovich et al, "95 Environmental Rules Being Rolled Back Under Trump," The New York Times, December 21 2019, accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/climate/trump-environment-rollbacks.html.
[41] United States Environmental Protection Agency, "EPA Finalizes Affordable Clean Energy Rule, Ensuring Reliable, Diversified Energy Resources while Protecting our Environment," accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-finalizes-affordable-clean-energy-rule-ensuring-reliable-diversified-energy.
[42] The White House, "Remarks by President Trump on America's Environmental Leadership."
[43] Ibid.

This represents Trump's perspective toward international environmental policy including MPL. He sees the international environmental problem as an issue for which foreign countries are responsible, and believes that international environmental agreements should focus on regulating foreign countries that seem to be causing the damage to the U.S.

As mentioned above, one of the symbolic measures of the Trump administration's environmental policy under this principle was his declaration to withdraw from the Paris Accord on Climate Change. On June 1st 2017, he announced this withdrawal, noting that the U.S. will "start to negotiate, and we will see if we can make a deal that's fair."[44] The main factor regarding this withdrawal was concern over the impact on domestic industries. Trump stated his concern:

> Compliance with the terms of the Paris Accord and the onerous energy restrictions it has placed on the United States could cost America as much as 2.7 million lost jobs by 2025 according to the National Economic Research Associates. This includes 440,000 fewer manufacturing jobs —not what we need— believe me, this is not what we need —including automobile jobs, and the further decimation of vital American industries on which countless communities rely.[45]

In addition to the negative impacts on the domestic industry, the Paris Accord was unacceptable for Trump due to its "unfairness." In his statement, Trump criticized the Accord did not place an "obligation on the world's leading polluters."[46] He particularly pointed to China and India as these polluters, and concluded that "the Paris Accord is very unfair, at the highest level, to the United States."[47]

Therefore, the Trump administration has made the elimination of burdensome environmental regulations its basic stance on environmental policy. This attitude is considered to be an essential strategy in order to maintain political support from the manufacturing sector, which is one of Trump's major support bases. Moreover, an international environmental regime that not only is unfavorable to the U.S. domestic industry but also does not impose regulations on other countries that are causing major pollution is unacceptable to the administration. This principle applies to the field of MPL. For the Trump administration, involvement of other major contributing countries is a necessity for an international regime on MPL.

4.2: U.S. Policy against MPL under the Trump Administration

Despite its rollback of environmental regulations, in the field of MPL, the Trump administration signed the Save our Seas Act of 2018 (Public Law No: 115-265) in October 2018. This law reauthorizes and amends the Marine Debris Research, Prevention and Reduction Act (Public Law No: 109-449).[48]

The original Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act authorizes the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to undertake "a Marine Debris Prevention and Removal Program to reduce and prevent the occurrence and adverse impacts of marine debris on the marine environment and navigation

---

[44] The White House, "Statement by President Trump on the Paris Climate Accord," accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-trump-paris-climate-accord/.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] U.S. Congress, Senate, *Save Our Seas Act of 2018*, S.3508, 115th Cong, became public law October 11, 2018, accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/3508/text.

safety."[49] The program components are: (1) mapping, identification, impact assessment, removal and prevention, (2) reducing and preventing loss of gear, and (3) outreach. One outcome of this act was the removal of over 17,000 metric tons of marine debris from the ocean and Great Lakes.[50]

The 2018 amendment of the act reauthorizes the program:

> for four years, promotes international action to reduce marine debris in our ocean, authorizes cleanup and response actions needed as a result of severe marine debris events, such as hurricanes or tsunamis, and updates the membership of the Interagency Marine Debris Coordinating Committee. Additionally, the Act authorizes and requires NOAA to work with other Federal agencies to develop additional outreach and education strategies to address sources of marine debris.[51]

Through this extended authorization, NOAA will continue the program up until 2022, on a scale of $10 million per year.[52] This policy focuses on prevention, removal, research, emergency response and outreach related to MPL. For example, concerning prevention, the program provides funds to "projects across the country that use outreach and education as a way to prevent marine debris."[53]

One of the reasons this policy was implemented was that it does not restrict industries. Here, there are other existing acts related to the reduction on MPL, such as the Clean Water Act (Public Law No: 92-500), the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (Public Law No: 94-80), and the Microbead-Free Waters Act of 2015 (Public Law No: 114-114). These acts include regulatory measures. For example, the Microbead-Free Waters Act of 2015 "demands the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to ban rinse-off cosmetics that contain intentionally-added plastic microbeads beginning on January 1, 2018, and to ban manufacturing of these cosmetics beginning on July 1, 2017."[54] This policy also includes the reinforcement of regulations on certain industries, especially on plastic producers. Such regulations have not been strengthened under the Trump administration. However, unlike the Microbead-Free Waters Act of 2015, the Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act did not include restrictive measures. Therefore, it was accepted and promoted by the Trump administration.

Furthermore, the transboundary character of MPL enabled Trump to link the issue to his stance on international environmental policy. On October 11th, 2018, Trump gave a speech when signing the Save Our Seas Act of 2018 in the Oval Office. Here, expressing his concern over MPL, Trump stated:

> Every year, over 8 million tons of garbage is dumped into our beautiful oceans by many countries of the world. That includes China, that includes Japan, and that includes many, many countries.

---

[49] U.S. Congress, Senate, *Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act*, S.362, 109th Cong, became public law December 22, 2006, accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.congress.gov/bill/109th-congress/senate-bill/362?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22S362%22%5D%7D&s=2&r=1.

[50] Ministry of the Environment, Japan, "The United States: Actions and Progress on Marine Plastic Litter," accessed February 8, 2020, https://g20mpl.org/partners/unitedstates.

[51] United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "The Marine Debris Act," accessed February 8, 2020, https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/about-our-program/marine-debris-act.

[52] AP News, "Trump signs Save our Seas Act into law," October 14, 2018, accessed February 8, 2020, https://apnews.com/2d5947a8bd924adc9f0ab077177fabdd.

[53] United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "Marine Debris Program: Prevention," accessed February 8, 2020, https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/current-efforts/prevention.

[54] U.S. Congress, House, *Microbead-Free Waters Act of 2015*, H.R.1321, 114th Cong, became public law December 28, 2015, accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/1321. Also see, Ministry of the Environment, Japan, "The United States: Actions and Progress on Marine Plastic Litter,"

> This waste, trash, and debris harms not only marine life, but also fishermen, coastal economies along America's vast stretches. The bad news is it floats toward us. I've seen pictures recently, and some of you have seen them, where there's — a vast, tremendous, unthinkable amount of garbage is floating right into our coast, in particular along the West Coast.
>
> And we're charged with removing it, which is a very unfair situation. It comes from other countries very far away. It takes six months and a year to float over, but it gets here, and it's a very unfair situation. It's also unbelievably bad for the oceans.
>
> Every year, over 8 million tons of garbage is dumped into our beautiful oceans. And when you think of that number — I mean, to think 8 million tons — and I would say it's probably — Senators, I think it's probably more than that, based on what I've seen and based on the kind of work that I've seen being done.
>
> This dumping has happened for years and even for decades. Previous administrations did absolutely nothing to take on the foreign countries responsible. We've already notified most of them and we've notified them very strongly.[55]

Again, Trump's statement reflects his intention to place the burden of dealing with MPL on foreign countries, such as China and Japan, despite the fact that the U.S. is also one of the major contributing countries. Trump perceives the inaction of other major contributing countries as the cause of MPL pollution in the U.S.

Although Trump rolled back environmental regulations, he implemented a measure to promote MPL reduction. This was due to the non-regulatory character of the measure, and the visibility of transboundary damage to U.S. coasts from MPL. This indicates that policy, which does not pose restrictions on manufacturers can meet the condition for incorporation into the Trump administration's environmental policy.

4.3: U.S. position on the G7 regime and the G20 regime on MPL

This section will describe the position of the U.S. toward the G7 regime and the G20 regime on MPL. This section will clarify that the U.S. focused on two variables: (1) involvement of major contributing countries, and (2) flexibility of policy approaches, and how these factors influenced the decision of the U.S. to accept or reject these two regimes, based on its stance on environmental policy and MPL under the Trump administration, as described in the previous sections.

First, regarding the involvement of other major contributing countries, during an interview with CTV News after the G7 Environmental Meeting in Halifax in September 2018, Andrew Wheeler, the head of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, responded to a question about the U.S. signing the Ocean Plastics Charter by stating:

> As I said in the meeting today after the press left, we have to be aware of the fact that 60 per cent of the plastic waste comes from five countries that are not represented by us. The G7 needs to do a better job of

[55] The White House, "Remarks by President Trump at Signing of S. 3508, the "Save Our Seas Act of 2018"," accessed May 16, 2020. https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-signing-s-3508-save-seas-act-2018/

outreach to those countries if we're going to solve this problem internationally.[56]

Although Wheeler did not mention the specific countries, he clearly criticized the G7 regime for its failure to hold accountable other major contributing countries that emit plastic litter into the ocean.

Facing the G20 negotiations, Wheeler further emphasized that the world should focus on Asia where six Asian countries account for 60% of MPL outflows.[57] Again, this represented the U.S.'s stance and its focus on the involvement of other major contributing countries when deciding whether or not to join the regime.

After signing the G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter, Wheeler welcomed the agreement involving other major contributing countries as follows:

> There are many environmental matters where working together we can make genuine progress to improve the environment and living conditions around the world. This is our focus, and I look forward to continuing to work with my G20 partners in these areas.[58]

Due to the fact that the G20 regime involved other major contributing countries, the U.S. was able to join the regime and express its commitment toward further cooperation. These statements reflect the fact that U.S. focused on involvement of other major countries in deciding its stance on the two regimes. Lack of involvement of other major contributing countries in the regime negatively affected the U.S.'s stance toward the G7 regime.

Second, considering the flexibility of policy approaches, the U.S. inserted a statement emphasizing its prioritization of economic growth in the G7 Charlevoix summit Communique as follows:

> The United States reiterates its commitment to advancing sustainable economic growth, and underscores the importance of continued action to reduce air and water pollution.[59]

While this statement concerns not only MPL but also other environmental issues discussed at the summit, it shows that the U.S. focused on economic growth and hesitated to join regimes that have restrictive characteristics, which is consistent with the administration's stance towards environmental issues described in the previous sections.

Hesitation of the U.S. toward inflexible policy approaches is more clearly represented in the interview by the Washington Post prior to the G20 negotiations. In this case, while emphasizing the necessity to tackle the problem of MPL internationally, Wheeler criticized approaches focused on product bans with the comment:

> The plastic straw bans, that's not what's creating the problem in the oceans[.]

---

[56] Michael Tutton, "' Ottawa to gradually eliminate plastic waste in its operations across the country," CTV News, September 21, 2018, accessed May 16, 2020, https://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/ottawa-to-gradually-eliminate-plastic-waste-in-its-operations-across-the-country-1.4102515?cache=walqrkeg%3FclipId%3D68596.

[57] Juliet Eilperin and Brady Dennis, "EPA chief will focus on ocean trash, not climate change, at upcoming global summit," The Washington Post, June 11, 2019, accessed May 16, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2019/06/10/epa-chief-will-focus-ocean-trash-not-climate-change-upcoming-global-summit/.

[58] United States Environmental Protection Agency, "EPA Administrator Concludes Engagements at G20 Environmental Ministers Meeting," accessed May 16, 2020, https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-administrator-concludes-engagements-g20-environmental-ministers-meeting.

[59] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, "The Charlevoix G7 Summit Communique," June 9, 2018, accessed May 16, 2020, https://www.mofa.go.jp/ecm/ec/page4e_000847.html.

> That's a drop in the bucket, as far as the amount of plastic. . . . And I'm concerned that if people think, 'Well if I get rid of my plastic straw, then that solves the problem.'[60]

Here, Wheeler stated that product bans are not the solution to the problem and suggested other possibilities for policy approaches. While the U.S. understood the importance of international cooperation on MPL, they focused on the flexibility of policy approaches, refusing to join a regime that would pose a restriction to domestic industries. Since the G7 regime lacked flexibility with regard to its policy approaches including restrictive measures, the U.S. did not agree to join the regime since it could negatively affect the domestic economy.

On the contrary, the U.S. was able to accept the G20 regime since it was flexible and did not force the U.S. to take restrictive measures. After the G20 Osaka summit, Trump held a press briefing explaining the results of the summit. Here, he expressed the outcome of the environmental agreements as follows:

> I was with the Prime Minister —just left him a little while ago— and they're thrilled with the deal, and we're thrilled. Everybody wants it. And hopefully it will be a bipartisan deal. I view that. I told that to Nancy Pelosi. I said, "View this as a bipartisan deal," because a lot of the Democrats want it, especially, I would say, the farmers, but, really, the industrial areas also. The unions —we've got things on wages and we've got things on the environment that few people have ever been able to get into an agreement. And it's a very big deal. It's a very big deal. And it's a great deal. Tremendous support.[61]

According to the environment section of the leaders' declaration (paragraphs 38 and 39), the agreement that was achieved at the summit in the environmental field was the "Osaka Blue Ocean Vision."[62] Thus, this statement by Trump refers to the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision. This comment is attempted to justify to the industrial sectors the decision to join the G20 regime on MPL. Since the regime would not force restrictions to the U.S. industries, Trump was able to join the regime and justify his decision to his supporters.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, based on the previous discussion, this section explains the variables that affect a country's decision-making and how they influenced the U.S. Trump administration's decision on the G20 regime and the G7 regime.

First, the U.S.'s perspective on international environmental policy related to MPL viewed the U.S. as a "victim" and other major contributing countries, such as China as "polluters." International environmental regimes that do not include restrictions on other major contributing countries were labeled "unfair" and unacceptable to the U.S. The total MPL outflow from the G7 countries only account for 2% of the world's entire MPL outflow. The Ocean Plastic Charter did not include major contributing countries, especially China. On the other hand, MPL outflow from the G20 members covered about half of the global MPL outflows. Moreover, major contributing countries, such as China, India, and Indonesia were members of the G20 regime. Since the regime included these major

[60] Juliet Eilperin and Brady Dennis, "EPA chief will focus on ocean trash, not climate change, at upcoming global summit," The Washington Post, June 11, 2019.
[61] The White House, "Remarks by President Trump in Press Conference | Osaka, Japan," accessed May 16, 2020. https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-press-conference-osaka-japan/.
[62] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, "G20 Osaka Leaders Declaration."

contributing countries including China which the U.S. considered "polluters," and stipulated measures for responsible countries, it fitted in with Trump's principle on international environmental policy.

Second, since the Trump administration gains support from industrial sectors, such as manufactures, Trump was against policies and measures that were disadvantageous to these sectors, in terms of restrictions and employment. On the other hand, environmental policies without restrictions had the potential to be accepted by the administration, both domestically and internationally. In 2018, the administration implemented the Save Our Seas Act of 2018 and strengthened NOAA's project for MPL reduction that did not include regulatory measures. Hence, the Ocean Plastics Charter was unacceptable to the U.S., since it demanded members take every policy approach listed in the charter in order to achieve numerical targets, including regulative measures on industries. On the other hand, the G20 regime merely listed policy measures as a "list of choices", enabling members to take their own courses toward the goals. This enabled the U.S. to join the regime without having to adopt regulatory measures towards manufacturing industries, which were Trump's main supporters.

The U.S. focused on the two variables when making its decisions about the two regimes. It expressed the necessity to work with countries that are the major sources of MPL outflow and criticized the G7 regime for not including such countries. The U.S. also criticized the restrictive approaches taken by the G7 regime, and emphasized the importance of prioritizing economic activities. Therefore, the U.S. was unable to accept an inflexible regime that force restrictive measures.

The U.S. was able to join the G20 regime since the regime equally involved major contributing countries including China and enabled flexibility for the U.S. to implement polices without regulating certain industries. Conversely, due to the G7 regime's smaller number of member countries in the original phase which lacked major contributing countries and flexibility on policy approaches, it failed to involve the U.S. Hence, in this case study, the two variables, (1) involvement of other major countries and (2) flexibility of policy approaches functioned as conditions that enabled U.S. —a major contributing country on MPL— to join the G20 regime on MPL but to reject the G7 regime. This case study shows that these two variables of an environmental regime functioned as conditions for the decision of a major contributing country to join an international environmental regime of that problem.

However, there are problems that need to be further addressed. While the two variables were conditions for the U.S. —a major contributing country— to join international regime on MPL, it may not always be applicable for all countries. Despite lacking other major contributing countries and flexibility of policy approaches, five of the G7 members —although they are not major contributing countries— had joined the Ocean Plastics Charter. According to the explanation of the Canadian government, the ambition of the five members were to "demonstrate their commitment to take concrete and ambitious action to address the problem."[63] They may have prioritized the demonstration of global leadership over the two variables. On the other hand, Japan, which ranks 30th on outflow of MPL in the study by Jambeck, refused to join the G7.[64] Japan is not a major contributing country, but its MPL outflow is larger than that of the five member countries. The reason is described in the government's answer to the question from Mr. Akihiro Hatsuka, member of the House of Representatives, regarding the Ocean Plastics Charter.

[63] Government of Canada, "Ocean Plastics Charter."
[64] Ministry of the Environment, Japan, "海洋プラスチック問題について [Marine Plastic Problems]," accessed May 17, 2020, https://www.env.go.jp/council/03recycle/%E3%80%90%E8%B3%87%E6%96%99%EF%BC%93%E3%80%91%E6%B5%B7%E6%B4%8B%E3%83%97%E3%83%A9%E3%82%B9%E3%83%81%E3%83%83%E3%82%AF%E5%95%8F%E9%A1%8C%E3%81%AB%E3%81%A4%E3%81%84%E3%81%A6.pdf.

The Japanese government stated that Japan had to consider the impacts of regulations of the charter such as reduction of the use of plastics to everyday lives and the economy of the people.[65] Also, referring to the G20, Prime Minister Abe stated in the national congress that G7 only covers 2% of global MPL outflow, and expressed the necessity of international action that involves rising economies that emit large amount of MPL.[66] These show that the two conditions negatively affected Japan's decision towards the G7 regime. The differences between how major contributing countries and other countries consider these two variables is a remaining question that should be further researched.

Despite these limitations, the two variables and their functions as conditions to decision-making as explained in this case study have an important political implication in order to further promote international environmental cooperation on MPL. As mentioned in the introduction, involvement of major contributing countries in a regime is necessary for the regime to be effective. In order to win the participation of such countries in the regime, the regime must allow flexibility to its members and also involve other major contributing countries with similar political stances. However, these two conditions could make it difficult for the regime to pose restrictive measures. Thus, international environmental regimes face a dilemma between flexibility and participation of major contributing countries, when considering the effectiveness of international environmental regime.[67]

However, a flexible regime that lacks restrictive measures does not always mean that the regime is ineffective. The most important role of a regime is that it is implemented and that it promotes action to address the issue. Under the G20 regime, countries including the U.S. are making progress for further cooperation to solve the problem of MPL. Based on the agreements of the G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter, the first follow up meeting was held in October 2019. Here, participant countries including the G20 members and other invited countries shared information, such as policies, measures, plans, and best practices. As a result, they agreed to continue the sharing process and a report that covered the member countries' actions on MPL was published. After this follow up meeting, a portal site which includes each countries' report on actions against MPL was launched.[68] In addition, Japan, the U.S. and the EU held a joint workshop on scientific knowledge and innovative solutions and agreed to lead in the field of monitoring, innovation, understanding of sources respectively.[69] These cases show that this international regime is promoting international cooperation on MPL, including the U.S. However, only a year has passed since the regime's its construction. Attention should still be continuously paid to the progress of the G20 regime and its effectiveness towards reduction of MPL.

[65] Government of Japan, "衆議院議員初鹿明博君提出海洋プラスチック憲章に関する質問に対する答弁書 [Answer to the question regarding the Marine Plastics Charter from Mr. Akihiro Hatsuka, member of the House of Representatives]," June 22, 2018, accessed May 17, 2020, http://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb_shitsumon.nsf/html/shitsumon/b196386.htm.
[66] National Diet Library, "第 198 回国会参議院予算委員会 [198th Congress, House of Councilors Budget Committee]," March 18, 2019, accessed May 17, 2020, https://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/#/detailPDF?minId=119815261X01120190318&page=10&spkNum=63&current=7.
[67] Grubb provides a tradeoff of "broad" and "deep" in international environmental negotiation. Michael Grubb, "From Lima to Paris, Part 1: The Lima Hangover," Climate Policy, 15-3, (May 2015), pp.299-301.
[68] Ministry of the Environment, Japan, "Towards Osaka Blue Ocean Vision," accessed February 8, 2020, https://g20mpl.org/.
[69] Ministry of the Environment, Japan,

Reference

Abramson, Alana, "'I Can Be More Presidential Than Any President.' Read Trump's Ohio Rally Speech," *TIME*, July 26, 2017. Accessed February 8, 2020, https://time.com/4874161/donald-trump-transcript-youngstown-ohio/.

AP News, "Trump signs Save our Seas Act into law," October 14, 2018. Accessed February 8, 2020, https://apnews.com/2d5947a8bd924adc9f0ab077177fabdd.

Cheng, Fang-Ting, *重層レジームと気候変動交渉：米中対立から協調、パリ協定へ [The Formulation of Complementary Relationships among Overlapping Regimes: Negotiations on Climate Change, U.S.-China Relations, and the Paris Agreement]*, Kanagawa: Gendaitosho, 2017.

CNN, "exit polls: election 2016." Accessed February 8, 2020, https://edition.cnn.com/election/2016/results/exit-polls/national/president.

Eilperin, Juliet, and Brady Dennis, "EPA chief will focus on ocean trash, not climate change, at upcoming global summit," *The Washington Post*, June 16, 2019. Accessed May 16, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2019/06/10/epa-chief-will-focus-ocean-trash-not-climate-change-upcoming-global-summit/.

Government of Canada, "Ocean Plastics Charter." Accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/managing-reducing-waste/international-commitments/ocean-plastics-charter.html.

Government of Japan, "衆議院議員初鹿明博君提出海洋プラスチック憲章に関する質問に対する答弁書 [Answer to the question regarding the Marine Plastics Charter from Mr. Akihiro Hatsuka, member of the House of Representatives]," June 22, 2018. Accessed May 17, 2020, http://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb_shitsumon.nsf/html/shitsumon/b196386.htm.

Grubb, Michael, "From Lima to Paris, Part 1: The Lima Hangover," *Climate Policy*, 15-3, (May 2015), pp.299-301.

Isobe, Atsuhiko, Kenta Kubo, Yuta Tamura, Shin'ichio Kako, Etsuko Nakashima, and Naoki Fujii, "Selective transport of microplastics and mesoplastic by drifting in coastal waters" *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 89 (2014), pp.324-330.

Jambeck, Jenna R., Roland Geyer, Chris Wilcox, Theodore R. Siegler, Miriam Perryman, Anthony Andrady, Ramani Narayan, and Kara Lavender Law, "Plastic waste inputs from land into the ocean," *Science*, 347 (2015), pp.768-771.

Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection, *Sources, Fate and Effects of Microplastics in the Marine Environment: Part 2 of a Global Assessment*, London, United Kingdom: IMO, 2016. Accessed February 8, 2020, http://www.gesamp.org/site/assets/files/1275/sources-fate-and-effects-of-microplastics-in-the-marine-environment-part-2-of-a-global-assessment-en.pdf.

Kanari, Ryuichi, *ルポ トランプ王国2:ラストベルト再訪 [Report Trump Kingdom 2 : Revisit to the "Rust Belt"]*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2019.

Keohane, Robert O., and David G. Victor, "The Regime Complex for Climate Change," Discussion paper 2010-33, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Harvard Project on International Climate Agreements.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, "G20 Osaka Leaders Declaration," June 29, 2019. Accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/economy/g20_summit/osaka19/en/documents/final_g20_osaka_leaders_declaration.html.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, "The Charlevoix G7 Summit Communique," June 9, 2018. Accessed May 16, 2020, https://www.mofa.go.jp/ecm/ec/page4e_000847.html.

Ministry of the Environment, Japan, *令和元年版環境白書・循環型社会白書・生物多様性白書 [Annual Report on the Environment, the Sound Material-Cycle Society and Biodiversity in Japan 2019]*, Tokyo, Japan: 2019. Accessed February 8, 2020, http://www.env.go.jp/policy/hakusyo/r01/pdf/full.pdf.

Ministry of the Environment, Japan, "G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter." Accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.env.go.jp/press/files/jp/111826.pdf.

Ministry of the Environment, Japan, "海洋プラスチック問題について　[Marine Plastic Problems]." Accessed May 17, 2020, https://www.env.go.jp/council/03recycle/%E3%80%90%E8%B3%87%E6%96%99%EF%BC%93%E3%80%91%E6%B5%B7%E6%B4%8B%E3%83%97%E3%83%A9%E3%82%B9%E3%83%81%E3%83%83%E3%82%AF%E5%95%8F%E9%A1%8C%E3%81%AB%E3%81%A4%E3%81%84%E3%81%A6.pdf.

Ministry of the Environment, Japan, "Results of G20 Resource Efficiency Dialogue 2019 and follow up of the G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter." Accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.env.go.jp/en/water/marine_litter/2019g20fu.html.

Ministry of the Environment, Japan, "The United States: Actions and Progress on Marine Plastic Litter." Accessed February 8, 2020, https://g20mpl.org/partners/unitedstates.

Ministry of the Environment, Japan, "Towards Osaka Blue Ocean Vision." Accessed February 8, 2020, https://g20mpl.org/.

Murphy, Hannah, and Aynsley Kellow, "Forum Shopping in Global Governance: Understanding States, Business and NGOs in Multiple Arenas," *Global Policy*, 4-2 (2013), pp.139-149.

National Diet Library, "第 198 回国会参議院予算委員会　[198th Congress, House of Councilors Budget Committee]," March 18, 2019. Accessed May 17, 2020, https://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/#/detailPDF?minId=119815261X01120190318&page=10&spkNum=63&current=7.

Ono, Hiroshi, "Outcomes of the G20 Ministerial Meeting on Energy Transitions and Global Environment for Sustainable Growth in Karuizawa, Nagano, Japan." (Lecture, United Nations University, October 9, 2019. Accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.pco-prime.com/g20/material/2-AM/2-AM-3.pdf.

Popovich, Nadja, Livia Albeck-Ripka, and Kendra Pierre-Loius, "95 Environmental Rules Being Rolled Back Under Trump," *The New York Times*, December 21, 2019. Accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/climate/trump-environment-rollbacks.html.

Raubenheimer, Karen, Alistair McIlgorm, and Nilüfer Oral, "Towards an improved international framework to govern the life cycle of plastics," *Review of European, Comparative & International Environmental Law*, 27-3 (November 2018): pp.210-221.

Raustiala, Kal, and David G. Victor, "The Regime Complex for Plant Genetic Resources," *International Organization* 58-2, (Spring 2004), pp.277-309.

Rogers, Kate, and Coral Davenport, "Trump Saw Opportunity in Speech on Environment. Critics Saw a '"1984" Moment," *The New York Times*, July 8, 2019. Accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/08/us/politics/trump-environment-climate-change.html.

Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, *Marine Debris as a Global Environmental Problem: Introducing a solutions based framework focused on plastic, A STAP Information Document*, Washington DC, United States: Global Environmental Facility, 2011. Accessed February 8, 2020, http://www.stapgef.org/sites/default/files/stap/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Marine-Debris.pdf.

Smythe, Elizabeth, “Your Place or Mine? States, International Organizations and the Negotiation of Investment Rules,” *Transnational Corporations*, 7-3, (1998), pp.85-120.

Thaysen, Clara, Kathleen Stevack, Ralph Rufflo, David C. Poirier, Hannah De Frond, Julieta DeVera, Grace Sheng, and Chelsea M Rochman, “Leachate From Expanded Polystyrene Cups Is Toxic to Aquatic Invertebrates (Ceriodaphina dubia),” *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 5-71 (2018), pp.113-121.

The White House, “Remarks by President Trump at Signing of S. 3508, the “Save Our Seas Act of 2018”.” Accessed May 16, 2020, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-signing-s-3508-save-seas-act-2018/.

The White House, “Remarks by President Trump in Press Conference | Osaka, Japan.” Accessed May 16, 2020. https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-press-conference-osaka-japan/.

The White House, “Remarks by President Trump on America’s Environmental Leadership.” Accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-americas-environmental-leadership/.

The White House, “Statement by President Trump on the Paris Climate Accord.” Accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-trump-paris-climate-accord/.

Tutton, Michael, “Ottawa to gradually eliminate plastic waste in its operations across the country,” *CTV News*, September 21, 2018. Accessed May 16, 2020, https://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/ottawa-to-gradually-eliminate-plastic-waste-in-its-operations-across-the-country-1.4102515?cache=walqrkeg%3FclipId%3D68596.

Ueno, Takahiro, *複数制度化する温暖化防止の国際枠組み―京都議定書、G8 サミット、アジア太平洋パートナーシップの並存状況の分析― [Parallel Tracks for Global Climate Change Regime: Analysis on the Coexistence of UNFCCC/Kyoto, G8 and Asia Pacific Partnership]*, Tokyo: CRIEPI Research Report, 2006.

UN Environment, *Combating Marine Plastic Litter and Microplastics: An Assessment of the Eff ectiveness of Relevant International, Regional and Subregional Governance Strategies and Approaches*, Nairobi, Kenya: 2017.

United States Environmental Protection Agency, “EPA Administrator Concludes Engagements at G20 Environmental Ministers Meeting.” Accessed May 16, 2020, https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-administrator-concludes-engagements-g20-environmental-ministers-meeting.

United States Environmental Protection Agency, “EPA Finalizes Affordable Clean Energy Rule, Ensuring Reliable, Diversified Energy Resources while Protecting our Environment.” Accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-finalizes-affordable-clean-energy-rule-ensuring-reliable-diversified-energy.

United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, “Marine Debris Program: Prevention.” Accessed February 8, 2020, https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/current-efforts/prevention.

United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, “The Marine Debris Act.” Accessed February 8, 2020, https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/about-our-program/marine-debris-act.

University of Toronto, “Charlevoix Blueprint for Healthy Oceans, Seas and Resilient Coastal Communities.” Accessed February 8, 2020, http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2018charlevoix/oceans-blueprint.html.

U.S. Congress, House, *Microbead-Free Waters Act of 2015*, H.R.1321, 114th Cong, became public law December 28, 2015. Accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/1321.

U.S. Congress, Senate, *Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act*, S.362, 109th Cong, became public law December 22, 2006. Accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.congress.gov/bill/109th-congress/senate-bill/362?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22S362%22%5D%7D&s=2&r=1.

U.S. Congress, Senate, *Save Our Seas Act of 2018*, S.3508, 115th Cong, became public law October 11, 2018. Accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/3508/text.

Wahlen, Catherine Benson, "Five G7 Countries and EU Pledge to Tackle Pollution in Ocean Plastics Charter," *International Institute for Sustainable Development*, June 14, 2018. Accessed February 8, 2020, https://sdg.iisd.org/news/five-g7-countries-and-eu-pledge-to-tackle-pollution-in-ocean-plastics-charter/.

World Economic Forum, *The New Plastic Economy: Rethinking the future of plastics*, Geneva, Switzerland: 2016. Accessed February 8, 2020, http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_The_New_Plastics_Economy.pdf.

Wysocki, Ina Tessnow-von, and Philippe Le Billon, "Plastics at sea: Treaty design for a global solution to marine plastic pollution," *Environmental Science and Policy*, 100 (2019): pp.94-104.